



Nebraska Task Force - I

July 1998

JUNE 5-7 CANINE SEMINAR REPORT

Teaching the seminar were two members of the California Rescue Dog Association, who are also members of FEMA USAR Task Forces. These two members believe strongly in the Swiss philosophy of training rescue dogs, which is very different from the methods we use to train.

The focus of this training was specifically designed to increase a canine's penetration through debris to an entrapped victim. Often a canine will alert on a victim that is inaccessible, then become frustrated and lose focus, coming off the alert before we can get to the canine to visualize where the alert was. By teaching strong penetration the canine is conditioned to stay with the victim longer, because the canine is focused on gaining access to the victim and not just merely barking.

A total of about 20-25 canines were in attendance. On each rotation each dog would perform on average three alerts. After the alert, the dog and handler were critiqued on performance and techniques used. They were then given suggestions on things to do to improve the next rotation. All feedback from the instructors was honest, professional, and informative.

Many handlers commented on how nice the personnel at the fire stations were to them. Many of the firefighters at these stations came to observe the training.

A detailed
available

report is
upon request.

Canine Bulletin NE-TF1

*Published by
Lincoln Fire Department
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DEPLOYMENT REPORT

Elaine Sawtell, compiled with input from CSS Herschel McAlister and Vickie Senters

Elaine Sawtell, DITTO, Type 1 (cadaver trained)
Herschel McAlister, MAX, Type 1 (cadaver trained)
Linda Hoffert, CHIP, Type II (not cadaver trained)
Vickie Senters, KELLY (cadaver trained), not certified but considered deployable by NE-TF1 Guidelines.
Attempts to contact Amy Rising, Louie, Type 1, were unsuccessful in time for deployment.

The Canine Teams arrived on site from Springfield, MO at 2:45 am. June 9. First search conducted 7:00 a.m. June 9. The first two searches by K9 Ditto and K9 Max were conducted for live victims; consequently, canines would not be expected to alert on dead victims.

The dogs were able to locate body parts in up to two feet of grain; however, their ability to work through 4 to 6 feet of grain with the high levels of grain dust, methane and, at time, smoke is unknown, particularly early in the mission when victim decomposition would have been in beginning stages.

LESSONS LEARNED:

NE-TF1 support and cooperation from Task Force Leaders was excellent. The following are ways we as handlers can improve canine performance.

1. Dogs need to be isolated to rest. Dogs held up well but were tiring because of heat. Being kenneled in open, they did not rest as well. While on shift, they should be kenneled in a tent away from noise and people as much as possible.
2. Handlers appreciated being given latitude by TFLs to work canines to best advantage. However, handlers should maintain 12 hour shifts and take dogs to rest area when off duty. Dog and handler will rest better if not onsite.
3. Handlers should attend briefings at shift change.

4. Handlers

should be

familiar with structure(s) being searched and obtain ongoing information to enable them to suggest how dogs can best be used. Conferring with structural engineer may also be useful in determining scent source origin.

5. When one dog is working, other handler should observe to assist in reading areas of interest. (Caution: observing handler may inadvertently encourage his/her dog to alert or show interest at locations indicated by first dog.)

6. When possible, Search Team Managers or Rescue personnel most familiar with dogs should accompany on searches to assist.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Assigning Jim George, Steve Dolezal, and Eric Jones to accompany dog teams was very beneficial because of their interaction with canine training and their familiarity with the site. Since Eric Jones is presently training a canine, being able to watch experienced dogs work was particularly useful to him.

2. Logistical support for canines was prompt when pools were requested.

3. Without K9 Ditto's light-weight repelling harness, it would have been very difficult or impossible to lower K9 Kelly into tunnels. At one point harness was not available on site, thus slowing search operation.

4. Having only 3 dogs cadaver trained necessitated 3-dog rotation instead of 4, thus affecting shift rotation.

5. Improvements could be made in supplying more nutritious food, less junk food; also, on Saturday morning no food was available for school rest site.

6. CISD debriefing would have been beneficial Saturday morning during 3-hour down time.

Calendar of Canine Training for 1998

August 15 - 3rd & South/8am | November 21-NETF-1 in Missouri
September 19 Outstate in Nebraska | *December - NO monthly session
*October 10&11-T.B.A.

Training Logs Submission Address

Mail or Drop Off Logs to:
Sandy Yost
Lincoln Fire Department
1801 "Q" Street
Lincoln, Ne. 68508

Calendar of Events

Outstate NE-TF1 Members in Lincoln = Outstate Members of NE-TF1 will be in Lincoln to work their dogs. These members are very knowledgeable some have been deployed, so take advantage of this time to ask questions and get to know them. Observing the more advanced dog/handler teams can also help give you ideas for training your dog.

NE-TF1 in Missouri = Members of the Nebraska Task Force are invited to attend the MO-TF1 training session in Columbia, Missouri. HOWEVER, the most advanced dogs will be worked first. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE that you will have the opportunity to work your dog on the Missouri equipment.

TRAINERS - Monica Barger, Laura Elwess, Melody Jensen, Vicky Moser, and Dian Quist Sulek.

TRAINING LOGS - Training logs must be completed and turned in each month. Your training hours provide important documentation when the Nebraska Task Force (NE-TF1) is "audited" by FEMA. For those who are more than two months behind in submitting these logs we will be giving you a reminder call.

**The Lincoln Fire Department will be
hosting a basic certification event October
10th & 11th. Those interested please call
402-441-7363**

Submission of Items for the "Canine Bulletin"

E-mail, E-mail, E-mail!

E-mail address:
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Otherwise please mail submissions to:
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